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ABSTRACT

This paper examines variables such as linguistic ability in the target language, schemata, and psychological factors affecting the English language reading success or failure of a 31-year-old Thai graduate student in the information system program at a U.S. university. The subject's self-assessment of reading, speaking, and listening in Thai was at a good level, although his writing proficiency was lower than that of his other Thai language skills. He started learning English in the 5th elementary grade; graduate school was his first exposure to English-language instruction. Based on his Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score, the subject was rated as moderately good in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Yet he sought help to improve his reading ability, comprehension, and retention. The subject was given a general questionnaire and a reading questionnaire on metacognitive conceptualizations of his silent reading strategies in both Thai and English. The subject was then asked to discuss his reading; these discussions were audiotaped during the 90-minute tutoring sessions held each week for 2 months in 1995. Findings suggest that lack of background knowledge about the text topic may handicap the reader, as well as a reading misconception centered on knowledge-based rather than text-based processing. Questionnaires are appended. (Contains 33 references.) (NAV)

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Variables Affecting Reading Problem of a Thai Graduate Student

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A Case Study: Variables Affecting Reading Problem of a Thai Graduate Student

In a Thai university classroom of English as a foreign language, it is common to see students looking up vocabulary, read slowly and get confused by sophisticated syntax. Many Thai students complain that they spend many hours on reading a chapter in an English textbook. Furthermore, it is sad to hear that they cannot get the gist of what they read. Then, they feel too discouraged to continue reading and to seek further information from the English texts.

Thai students entering universities have as many as eight years of instruction in English. However, their English reading ability tends to be poor. According to Seelor's study (1978), the Nelson Denny Reading Test Form A was administered to thirty student teachers of English in a teacher training college. The result shows that their grade equivalent scores ranged from 2.1 to 4.8. Another study done by Nilagupta in 1982 also manifests that the mean grade equivalent score of the university students in the study was 4.4. These two studies uncover that the English reading ability of many Thai college students is not effective enough to make use of English resources at the college level. These results interest us enough to find out more about the variables which impede Thai college students to achieve in reading English.

Yorio (1971) points out that variables affecting reading problems for foreign language learners are their imperfect

knowledge of the target language such as vocabulary and structure and the interference of their native language. Normally foreign language learners are literate in their native language. Thus, foreign language readers should be able to process their reading in the foreign language in the same way as they do in their native language. Yet, because of the lack of strong knowledge of the target language, it makes their reading process in a foreign language more difficult. These readers cannot anticipate meanings, chunk strings of visual information into meaningful units, and make use of the correct cues effectively. Also, they have to pay close attention to decoding unfamiliar words and structures. This delays their reading process. According to Smith (1985), when readers encounter difficulty in processing text, cognitive resources like short term memory will need to be allocated to correct the difficulty. For instance, when readers are unable to comprehend what they are reading, their fix-up strategy like rereading is allocated. Simultaneously, their short-term memory needs to maintain their understanding of the text already read. Then, their short-term memory, which has a limited capacity to hold information, is overwhelmed since the readers try to fill short-term memory with too much visual information from the text. With its nature, the short-term memory clears itself automatically. Consequently, the readers get lost and cannot proceed with the next item of business. Then, they face comprehension breakdown.

Another source of reading problem of FL readers, which Yorio

points out, is the interference of the native language. Syntactic structures in their L1 makes their predicting and making meaning more difficult since the syntactic structures in their native language are relatively different from those of the target language. For instance, Thai students find a modifier before noun difficult to understand because in their native language nouns precede their modifiers. They often misuse a verb used as a predicative adjective as a main verb (Nilagupta, 1982). Also, a word of each language has different shades of meanings. When FL readers overgeneralize meanings of the word that they know in their first language (L1) to the target language, they tend to obtain a distorted meaning.

Nilagupta (1977) and Eskey (1986) seem to advocate Yorio's findings. In Nilagupta's study, she administered an English Screening Test, which consists of three subtests: vocabulary, structure and reading comprehension, to 1,278 Thai graduate students from four different majors--Public Administration, Business Administration, Applied Statistics and Development of Economics. The study reveals that Thai students have difficulty with passive voice, embedding, deletion, nominalization and negative words such as by no means, neither-nor and none.

Tzung-yu (1993) clearly supports Yorio's propositions as well. She states that EFL readers possibly fail in making meaning and comprehending, when reading English texts, because of insufficient English grammatical knowledge. To illustrate, one of the

significant difficulties in reading technical texts in English of Chinese college students pointed out is the confusion caused by the relative clause. Dependent clauses and independent clause are combined complicatedly, and the dependent clauses interrupt the subject-verb-object sequence of the independent clause. Moreover, the meaning constructed from this pattern is inverted in Chinese language and often deviant from the intended meaning. Therefore, it is difficult for EFL readers specifically EFL Chinese students to understand texts.

From the aforementioned studies, the researchers tend to hypothesize and assert that a primary variable affecting the reading problem of FL readers is the linguistic deficiency. FL readers or second language (L2) readers tend to have inadequate knowledge of the target language to deal with their L2 reading. This hypothesis about the reading problem of FL readers is more credible when some research conducted (Goodman, 1971; Coady, 1979; Clarke, 1988; Joanne, 1988; Royer & Carlo, 1991) demonstrates that the reading abilities in the first language do transfer to reading in a second language. If so, FL/SL readers should be able to apply their reading ability possessed in their L1 to reading in their L2. Otherwise, they probably have the language deficiency in the L2.

In addition, researchers, like Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) propose that schemata could be another variable affecting the reading failure or success of the L2 learners. Carrell & Eisterhold explain that there are two distinctive types of

schemata: Content schemata (Background knowledge of the content area of texts) and formal schemata (Background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical and organizational structures of different types of texts). If readers possess formal schemata, this background knowledge will assist them to anticipate structures of the text they are reading; for instance, the structure of fables or simple stories consists of characters, development and setting; the rhetorical structures of expository texts are cause and effect, collection, comparison and contrast, and description. Carrell and her colleagues' (1983) and Slater and his colleagues' studies (1985) done with ESL readers at the intermediate level and with ninth-grade native speakers respectively corroborate that the formal schemata do affect readers' comprehension and recall of what they read.

Carrell and Eisterhold state that the fact that readers cannot comprehend what they read results from their failure to activate appropriate schemata. The failure to activate the schemata may be due to the authors' not having provided sufficient clues in the texts for readers. Another possibility is due to readers' not possessing the schemata required and anticipated by the text author. Needless to say, they fail to make meaning from the texts.

The hypothesis of variables affecting the reading problem of FL readers has been expanded by L2 researchers who advocate the interactive model of L2 reading (Rumelhart, 1985; Eskey & Grabe, 1988; Eskey, 1988; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988; and Carrell, 1988).

Based on the interactive model of L2 reading, efficient readers must be able to apply both Top-down (knowledge-based processing) and Bottom-up (Text-based processing) strategies operating interactively. They should be able to make use of their prior knowledge to make predictions and to construct meanings from texts. To reduce the uncertainty in anticipating and sampling and to enhance their comprehension more efficiently, the readers should be able to apply the graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues. The process of employing the bottom-up and top-down strategies must automatically and fluently proceed without consciousness.

The interactive model of L2 reading leads to another hypothesis. That is, the reading problem of SL/FL readers does not result from any single variable, for example, lacking knowledge of the target language only or lacking prior knowledge only inasmuch as roles of each component in reading, such as knowledge of the target language, schemata, reading strategies and other variables are intertwined during the process of reading. Therefore, interplay of all variables affects the reading problem of SL/FL readers.

In addition, researchers like Mealey (1990) and Eskey (1986) propose some additional variables that account for the failure of FL/SL readers. Those are motivation and self-confidence. According to Mealey (p.598), motivation is a drive toward competence that is reinforced by feelings of efficacy following success. In order to obtain a reading competence, at least readers

should perceive himself as an efficient reader and experience successful reading. In fact, poor readers face with a lot of difficulties and fail to succeed in reading, so they feel discouraged and then do not persevere in reading. Never experiencing reading success makes them lack motivation and self-confidence in reading.

McCombs and Whisler (1989) present that to approach a learning task, learners evaluate their perception of task requirement against their competence. Then, they come up with expectancies of success or failure. After the evaluative process, if learners come up with an outcome expectancy of success, it will lead to positive affect such as confidence and motivation to do and take risks in approaching the task. In turn, if their outcome expectancies turns to be negative, it will lead to negative affect (e.g. anxiety) and lack motivation to do the task and to put their effort required to succeed in reading.

Based on the literature reviewed, several variables such as linguistic ability in the target language, schemata, and psychological factors affect reading success or failure of L2 readers. With a desire to experience and verify these variables claimed by many studies, a case study was conducted. The purpose of this case study is to explore factors which cause readability difficulty of a Thai EFL reader. Also, the investigator hopes to propose some remedial instruction to help the participant to read better.

Method

Participant

The participant of the study was a thirty-one-year-old graduate student studying in an Information System program at the University of Baltimore, Maryland. Based on his self-assessment, his proficiency of listening, speaking and reading in Thai--his native language--was at a good level, but his writing proficiency was lower than that of the other skills.

The participant started learning English as a foreign language at the fifth grade in his country. Until the college level, English had not been the language of instruction, even in his English class. Having received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from a state university in Thailand, he worked as a sales representative of a medicine company. Yet, English was rarely used for communications at his workplace.

In 1992, he began receiving tutoring in English in order to prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Then, he took the TOEFL test and obtained a score of 550. Based on his score, we could assume that his English ability was moderately good in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The result was congruent with his self-assessment.

The participant was admitted and became a graduate student in the Master of Information System program at the University of Baltimore (UB), Maryland in 1994. Attending the graduate school in the UM was the first time that he encountered the situation of

having English as a language of instruction. Yet, it seems that the school was the only place in which the participant used English for communication since his native tongue was still the usual language spoken in his residence.

The participant expressed himself to be an unskilled reader in English. Before attending the study program, he told the investigator that he normally spent at least six to seven hours on reading a chapter of his textbook. Even though he tolerated many hours of reading, he could not comprehend what he read. His problem interested the investigator and led him to examine which variables affect the participant's reading difficulties.

Instruments

Questionnaires There were two types of questionnaires used in this study.

1. General Questionnaire A questionnaire was developed to elicit relevant demographic information from the participant. It was also used to obtain the information of the participant's frequency of applying reading strategies during reading as well as of his attitude towards reading.

A section of the questionnaire used to elicit the information of the participant's frequency of applying reading strategies was adapted from Hahn's survey of reading strategies (1984) and developed based on Knight et al.'s (1985) and Padron and Waxman's studies (1988). Using a 4 Likert Scale (Always, usually, almost never and never), the participant judged each reading strategy.

Items on this section of the questionnaire included: 1) three statements pertaining to negative strategies the participant used during reading; and 2) twelve statements focusing on positive reading strategies he applied.

The other section of the questionnaire developed based on McKenna and Kear's Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (1990). It was used to obtain the information of the participant's attitude towards reading. Using a 1-4 Likert Scale (4=Happiest, 1=very upset), the participant judged eight statements about his own attitudes towards reading. Items on this section of the questionnaire included: 1) five statements focusing on his attitudes towards recreational reading; and 2) three statements pertaining to his attitudes towards academic reading. The raw score of the participant's responses on this particular section was converted into a percentage in order to determine the degree of his attitude towards reading.

2.Questionnaires for Reading A questionnaire was developed to elicit the participant's metacognitive conceptualizations of his silent reading strategies in both Thai and English.

This questionnaire was based on Carrell's Metacognitive Questionnaire (1989). Using a 1-5 Likert Scale (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree), the participant determined thirty-six statements about silent reading strategies. Items on the questionnaire included: 1) six statements measuring confidence of his reading abilities; 2) five statements pertaining to what he

does when he does not understand something; 3) seventeen statements pertaining to his perception of effective reading strategies; and 4) eight statements about his perception of what makes texts difficult to read.

This type of questionnaire was used after the participant did the silent reading and retelling during the miscue analysis session. The participant received two questionnaires. One was given after doing the silent reading in Thai. The other was given after doing the silent reading in English.

Miscue Analysis According to Watson and Henson (1991), miscue analysis is a window on the reading process. It provides a view of a reader's strategies, belief and comprehension in reading. In this study, miscue analyses were performed in both the participant's native language--Thai--and in the foreign language--English.

Two selected stories in English were Lamb to the Slaughter and The Landlady written by Roald Dahl. Two other stories in Thai were Love, Grief and Hope and Rainy Season selected from a Thai magazine. These four stories were selected based on Watson & Henson's criteria (1991, pp.53-54): 1) The story must be a complete text with a beginning, middle, and end; 2) It should be new to the reader; and 3) It must be slightly difficult for the reader.

The two stories read silently were The Landlady and Rainy Season. The other two stories read aloud were Lamb to the Slaughter and Love, Grief and Hope. While the participant was

reading aloud, the investigator was marking miscues. The marking system was based on Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory (1972). After both the silent reading and the oral reading, the participant was assigned to retell the story that he read. Then, his miscues, reading and retelling were analyzed.

Discourse Analysis In each tutorial session, the participant's explanations of what he understood from a text were audiotaped. Then, the audio-recordings were transcribed into written scripts and analyzed along with the investigator's diary. These written notes and scripts could reveal important information which greatly assist our understanding of how the participant interpreted the text.

Procedures

From February to March of 1995, the investigator gave a 90-minute-tutoring session per week in reading to the participant. The participant's and the investigator's discussion and the participant's thinking aloud were audiotaped.

In each tutorial session, the investigator normally introduced some reading strategies such as PRWR (Preview, Read, Write and Recite), making use of graphic organizer, etc. to the participant. The participant tried reading strategies which were introduced, read and discussed what he comprehended from the text with the investigator.

The participant's explanations of what he understood from reading were audiotaped and transcribed into written scripts. The

investigator also recorded his view of the participant's reading on diary.

On the third week of March, the miscue analysis procedure in English was performed. While the participant was reading aloud, such miscues as insertions, omissions, substitutions, mispronunciations and repetitions were coded. Having read aloud, the participant retold the story without aids. When the participant could not retell what he remembered, the investigator would provide a few aids or cues to facilitate his retelling. According to Lee (1986), using a second language production task can confound comprehension, so the retelling was done in the participant's first language--Thai. Then, the participant was assigned to read another story in English silently and to retell the story with the same format as he did after the oral reading. Afterwards, the participant responded to the Questionnaire for Reading in English.

On the fourth week of March, the miscue analysis procedure in Thai was performed. The participant followed the same steps as those he did in English: doing the oral reading, retelling, doing the silent reading, retelling and responding to the Questionnaire for Reading in Thai.

The miscues made during the oral reading in both languages were analyzed to see the participant's making use of the cues of the language and of the reading strategies to process written materials. His retellings were analyzed to see whether the

participant understood what he read. The Questionnaires for Reading in Thai and in English were analyzed to see the reading strategies that the participant applied during the silent reading.

At the first week of April, the participant was assigned to respond to a General Questionnaire developed to elicit relevant demographic information from the participant as well as to tap his attitude towards reading including his awareness of doing the silent reading.

Results and Discussion

Data gathered from the miscue analyses in both languages, the General Questionnaire, the Questionnaires for Reading in Thai and that for Reading in English, and the investigator's diary, including the written scripts were analyzed to investigate variables affecting the participant's reading problem. The results have shown that interplay of the following variables impedes the participant to achieve in reading in English.

1. Schemata Availability. A possibility that causes the participant to fail to comprehend the text may be due to the fact that he does not possess appropriate schemata or structures of background knowledge required and anticipated by the text author. If considered from his responses on the General Questionnaire, the participant's previous field of study was Biology, and his previous working experience was a sale representative of a medicine company. These prior knowledge and previous experiences were relatively unrelated to his present field of study, which was the information

management system. Then, while reading, the participant could not process his reading, for instance, generate predictions and inferences, determine significant units of the text and sample them because his existing schemata did not provide a framework for learning the content domain of the text. When the knowledge-based processing did not work, the text-based processing would be applied. Thus, the participant attempted to decode in the text in forms of translating prints into meanings and his L2 into L1 (as shown in script 1). Then, his decoding was processed unautomatically and engaged the limited cognitive resources, specifically the short-term memory. The short-term memory would be overloaded with visual information. Consequently, this process affected the overall quality of his comprehension and interpretation. That is, it caused the participant not only to fail to comprehend but also to misinterpret the meanings of the text.

Script 1

S: [Previewing the objectives of the chapter] OK, I think there is enough to know. Every time I read, I'd translate what I read.

T: Would you translate it silently or aloud?

S: Silently ..., silently.

2. Misconceptions of Reading. The participant seemed to conceptualize that reading should be either Bottom-up processing or Top-down processing. This misconception is inclined to be associated with genres of texts.

When reading a narrative text, the participant conceptualized reading as a knowledge-based processing. He engaged exclusively in applying his prior knowledge to make predictions, construct and interpret meanings without supporting evidence from the text. To illustrate, having read Lamb to the Slaughter, the participant over-interpreted some important events in the story based on his prior knowledge and assumptions; for instance: 1) Mr. Maloney was murdered because of a business problem (but indeed because he would divorce his wife); and 2) Sergeant Noonan and Mrs. Maloney had an affair, and planned to killed Mr. Maloney (but indeed both of them were friends. Only Mrs. Maloney intentionally killed her husband) (Shown in script 2 and 3):

Script 2

T: What do you guess about his career?

S: I think he's a businessman.

T: He's a businessman.

S: He had a business problem. Another possibility I think is that he might have had a family problem.

T: He had a family problem.

S: Formerly, I thought he might have wanted to divorce his wife. But finally, he was murdered, so I don't think that's a cause of the murder case.

T: You think he was killed because ...

S: It's a business problem.

T: What made you think that?

S: I don't know.

Script 3

S: Oh! I think the policeman might have had an affair with Miss. Maloney since Miss Maloney had dinner with them even though her husband had been murdered.

T: Who might have had an affair with Miss Maloney?

S: I guess Noonan. This's the only one I remember. Oh! I think he had an affair with her because there was a sentence mentioning that Miss Maloney knew both of the policemen. And she also had dinner with the policeman after her husband had been murdered. It's weird.

T: Can you tell me or guess why her husband was killed?

S: It might be the business problem. Or if she had an affair with those police, they might have planned to kill the guy.

His conception of reading process was changed from knowledge-based processing to text-based processing when he read an expository text, like a textbook. He failed to activate his schemata to facilitate his process of constructing meaning from the text, even though sometimes he might have had the content schemata relevant to the text. In other words, he tended to over-rely on the Bottom-up processing referred to as text-boundedness (Carrell, 1983, 1988). For example, the participant could not understand the meanings of "command-driven, character-based user interfaces." Overall he knew the meaning of each word, but still could not construct the intended meaning of this compound word. Had he

applied his previous experience of working with simple computer systems, he could have understood the concept of the word (shown in script 4). Furthermore, the participant tends to believe that it is inappropriate to apply his prior knowledge or previous experience of the content domain of the text to construct meanings (as shown in script 5). In other words, he thought meanings are in the text only, so applying his prior knowledge could cause him to misinterpret the meanings from the textbook.

Script 4

T: Look at this sentence. [pointing to the first paragraph] This is interesting. "As the business world came to be dominated by IBM-compatible personal computers, we all became used to command-driven, character-based user interfaces: we simply keyboarded an instruction to the ubiquitous MS-DOS in response to a C> prompt. OBVIOUSLY, not everyone considered this environment "simple." Do you get any idea from this ?

S: Well! He is talking about tools. "We all became used to command-driven, character-based user interfaces." I think this sentence is important.

T: How could we interact with the old computer system?

S: Oh-O!

T: Did you notice the tense of this sentence? [encircling the word "came" in the context] It all happened.

S: He said that the IBM dominates it. We could interact with the old computer system through a keyboard and C> prompt.

T: Great! At the C> prompt ... When we interacted with the computer, we worked through C> prompt. How could we do with the C> prompt? If we get a C> prompt on the screen [drawing a screen with a C> prompt], how can you command it to print?

S: [Silent] "Keyboard an instruction to"

T: If I want to print a letter, how can I make the printer print?

S: Do something on the keyboard. We must press some command buttons on the keyboard.

T: OK. Can we command the computer to print from the C> prompt?

S: Yes, we can.

T: OK. What is the command?

S: Print.

Script 5

T: It's the linking between a personal computer and a local area network.

S: By accident, I have prior knowledge of the local area network.

T: Yes. Very good. You're very clever to apply your prior knowledge.

S: But it's not the solution of my reading problem.

T: Why not?

S: If I had no prior knowledge of this, what would I do? I might have had to learn the database. I think we need to ignore what I have known before and ...

Another severe misconception of reading is that he, as a reader, can succeed in reading without having a social interaction. The participant seems not to believe that having a social interaction could enhance his success of reading and assist him to clarify his unanswered questions from reading (as shown in Script 6).

Script 6

S: ... I might ask them [his friends] to clarify my questions. But I want to rely on myself as much as I can.

T: I think you should have a chance to talk or discuss what you read with your friends. It might make you understand more of what you read.

S: I want to help myself as much as I can. But ...

3. Insufficient Linguistic Ability. That readers can read more or less well depends on the extent that they perceive the relationship of written English and spoken English. Yet, the participant has minimal control of spoken and written English, so this negatively affects his reading. The questionnaires uncover that the participant has had limited opportunities to use English for communications both in Thailand and in the U.S. When he studied in Thailand, English was not a language of instruction. After graduating from college, he hardly used English language at work. Even while he was studying in the U.S., English was mostly used in his school only. His native language was the only language used in his residence. Thus, there was no question that the

participant had little command of spoken English.

In 1992-1993, the participant obtained tutoring in order to prepare for taking the Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL). However, his English language proficiency--listening, speaking, reading and writing--did not develop much inasmuch as the method of tutoring heavily emphasized test taking strategies. Besides, even though his score of 550 on the TOEFL indicates that the participant had a moderate proficiency of English, it did not assure that he had sufficient control of written English. Then, when encountering unfamiliar, sophisticated structures during reading, the participant tended to fail to make meanings; for instance:

> A combination of the functional expertise possessed by end-users and the technological competence of MIS specialists, who often assist end-users during systems development, may result in superior systems.

In considering the sentence, there is no difficult vocabulary that interferes with the participant. Yet, he could not understand the overall meaning of the sentence. His explanation reflected his misinterpretation and failure to comprehend the text. Additionally, it is also found that the participant's process of making meaning seemed to be blocked by complex structures that are significantly different from Thai language structures. These structures are deletion, embedding and relative clause. The finding is congruent with Nilagupta's (1977, 1982).

Besides, the participant had inadequate knowledge of language mechanics to facilitate his meaning making during reading. Such language mechanics as colon, dash, etc. could assist readers to understand meanings of the text, yet the participant failed to make use of them (shown in script 7).

Script 7

T: All right. Then, what are functional categories of personal productivity software?

S: I can't remember.

T: Look at the fourth paragraph.

S: "Several functional categories of personal productivity software..."

T: So you know this paragraph is taking about its categories. Next, do you see a colon in that sentence?

S: Yes. "Data management and analysis"

T: The colon indicates what the categories are.

S: First, data management and analysis. Second, authoring and presentation. Third, activity and notes tracking.

His minimal control of spoken and written language has impact on his word recognition ability as well. His miscues generated during the oral reading reflect that the participant did not master the sound-symbol association. To illustrate, he made a lot of nonsense words such as kanell (instead of knelt), tanquil (instead of tranquil), etc. It causes the participant to focus his attention on sounding out words instead of gathering information

and constructing meaning during the silent reading. Then, his processing of the text was delayed and caused the comprehension breakdown.

4. Self-perception. The participant had different self-perception as a reader in his native language from that in the English language. When reading in his native language, he perceived himself as an efficient reader and was able to apply cognitive reading strategies which he believes good readers use. As shown on the Questionnaire for Reading in Thai, his response reveals that the participant believed that he was able to apply cognitive strategies such as anticipating, making inference, activating schemata, identifying main points and bewaring when he understood or when he did not understand what he was reading. The response also reflects that the participant was aware of applying those cognitive strategies.

Figure 1

	Original Text	Translated Text
L1:	พวกเราอาศัยอยู่กลางเมืองดัคคา	We lived in the center of Ducca.
L2:	บ้านเราตั้งอยู่บนลานกว้างใหญ่	Our house was located on a big yard.

บ้านเรา = Our house

บ้านล่าง = A house located down the hill.

According to figure 1, miscues made during the oral reading in his first language show that the participant did apply those aforementioned strategies. In the second line (L2), he anticipated

the meaning of what was being read. The miscue in the second line is graphophonically and syntactically acceptable, but semantically unacceptable. When the meaning constructed did not make sense and was inconsistent with the information obtained in the first line (L1), the participant then applied such a fix-up strategy as rereading to correct the mistaken meaning.

Due to his self-perception as an efficient reader in his native language, this made him form his outcome expectancy for success of reading. He said, "You know I don't have any problem if I read this material in Thai." His self-perception as an efficient reader led him to a positive effect which is self-confidence. Then, he was not afraid of taking risks in applying such strategies as predicting, sampling, guessing and confirming to make meanings from texts.

When reading in the English text, the participant was likely to perceive himself as an unskilled reader. The participant often complained that he could not understand what he read, and that he could not monitor his reading as well as he did in Thai. Nevertheless, when considering the results from the Questionnaire for Reading in English which reflects his self-awareness of applying strategies and those from his retellings which reflect his comprehension from reading, we would obtain conflicting results. According to his responses on the Questionnaire for Reading in English, it displays that the participant perceived his ability to identify main ideas, apply his prior knowledge to make meanings and

have consciousness of when he could understand or could not understand while reading. He also indicated that he applied such repair strategies as rereading either at the problematic part or before the problematic point, and looking up unknown words in a dictionary when he failed to comprehend the text. As shown in his discussion of what he read and his retellings of the story, the participant missed many important points and events. Thus, we can assume from these inconsistent results that the fact that the participant formed his outcome expectancy for failure in reading causes him to be unable to employ his reading strategies effectively to facilitate his reading, even though he was aware of applying them. Then, he could not comprehend the text.

According to McCombs and his colleagues' study (1989), negative self-perception could lead to negative effects such as negative attitude and lack of motivation. Yet, this might not be a case for the participant. Based on his responses on the reading attitude assessment section on the General Questionnaire, he obtained a score of 84.4%. The result implies that the participant had a strongly positive attitude towards reading either for a recreational purpose or for an academic purpose. Furthermore, he persevered and tolerated reading for many hours even though he could not comprehend the text.

However, his self-perception as a reader when he read English texts led to a negative effect which is self-confidence. In reading an English text, the participant was likely to lack his

self-confidence in applying reading strategies to process his reading, to make meaning and to interpret meanings from texts (as shown in script 9).

Script 9

S: .... You know sometimes I am confused. I do not dare enough to skip some parts while reading. I wonder whether my understanding of what I read is correct. I'm afraid that I might misinterpret the meaning. You know I don't have any problem if I read this materials in Thai.

Due to lacking self-confidence of taking risks in making meanings, he was inclined to decode prints rather than doing hypothesis testing and making meaning. He would pay close attention to every single word and viewed words as equally important to the total phrase meaning and be unable to identify which units of text stored the most information. This affects his short-term memory and results in the comprehension breakdown.

5. Reading Strategies. Based on the results obtained from the miscue analyses in Thai, and the Questionnaires for Reading in Thai, they show that the participant is an experienced and proficient reader in his native language. He metacognitively applied cognitive reading strategies to make meaning such as predicting, activating his schemata, making use of cuing systems, making inferences and applying a fix-up strategy--rereading when failing to comprehend texts. The result obtained from the General Questionnaire asking about his reading strategies in general

corroborates that the participant knew some reading strategies and techniques to facilitate his comprehension, for example, asking questions about the text, making connection between what he reads and his prior knowledge and experience, making mental imagery, predicting outcomes, rereading, predicting teacher's anticipation, changing speed of reading and revising what he remembers, and guessing meaning of unknown words from contexts and roots.

The participant knew some reading strategies, so he should have been able to apply those strategies for reading in English as effectively as he did in his native language. Nevertheless, he could not do so and failed to do so because of such variables as his self-perception in reading English and self-confidence as discussed earlier.

In addition, despite the fact that the participant knew some reading strategies, they were not enough to facilitate him to comprehend the textbook. For instance, he failed to make use of graphic organizers or clues that could assist his understanding (shown in script 10).

Script 10

S: Well! I scanned this page, but I don't understand. While scanning, I found GUI... I didn't know what it is. Also I found DOS. What I knew was that the GUI must be relevant to the user interface.

T: OK.

S: Because I tried to read faster, I could not understand the

definitions of the GUI.

T: Even though you did not get the definition, can you guess what it is?

S: Probably a tool.

T: OK. It's possible.

S: It makes ...

T: What is its role in the computer system?

S: It's a picture, a trackball and mouse ...

T: Did you see an illustration on page 339? The illustration may help us to understand the message. Especially, figure ...

S: Figure 9.3. What is it about?

S: While reading, I didn't pay attention to it.

T: The illustration is an important part that can enhance our comprehension. [pointing to the word "figure 9.3" within the context]

S: Yes.

T: Let's look at the figure 9.3. "Initial screen on a Macintosh microcomputer, with explanation of its components in five boxes." The caption explains the explanation of its components in five boxes." The caption explains what the illustration is about ...

6. Concentration. Concentration is a variable that contributes to the participant's reading problem. Even though the participant established some predetermined questions in order to guide his reading, he unintentionally ignored them and read without

purposes. Thus, he might not have been able to concentrate on what he was reading (shown in script 11).

Script 11

T: Fortunately, the author guides our reading with his questions.

S: Do I need to keep this question in mind during reading?

T: Yes. It can help us to read with a purpose. Importantly, each question that the author generates for each section assists us to find the answer which is the main point of that section.

S: Yes. I must keep these questions in mind while reading.

T: Then, what is structured SDLC?

S: [reading silently]

S: I think there must be some problems in the old system. "The structured SDLC must be used to handle the capacity of information system by progressive breaking in detail into system development."

S: I must think what I am reading about. Formerly, I did not do like this. You know I normally spend 6-7 hours on reading a chapter.

The response on the questionnaire congruently supported that he loses his concentration during reading. That is, he often thinks about something else during reading, so he is unable to concentrate on the text being read and fails to comprehend the meaning. Then, he has to reread the whole text (shown in script 12).

Script 12

S: You want me to read this. [pointing to the summary.]

T: Yes, please.

[He took about 5 minutes to read the summary which was one-third of a page.]

T: What do you get from reading?

S: No, I don't get anything.

T: Don't you get anything?

S: I took around 2-3 minutes to read. I don't get anything. Even though you want me to write what I got from reading, I can't do it.

T: You had too little time to read?

S: [Silent]

The results obtained from the miscue analysis in English also confirm that the participant lost his concentration during the silent reading. They show that the participant could focus on his oral reading better than on the silent reading when reading English texts. If considered, the participant took more time to do the silent reading than to do the oral reading even though the number of words on the text used for the silent reading was fewer than that for the oral reading (see table 1). The participant also understood the story when he read aloud better than when he read silently. Therefore, it could be inferred that the participant can focus his concentration on the text when reading orally better than while reading silently.

Table 1: Summary of the participant's oral and silent reading

Reading Text	Minutes	Words	Words per minutes (wpm)
Silent reading (Eng)	32	3,363	105.09
Oral reading (Eng)	25	3,968	158.72
Silent reading (Thai)	21	2,310	110
Oral reading (Thai)	16	1,785	111.56

Discussion

The case study has uncovered that the variables that impede Thai EFL readers to achieve in reading comprehension are not restricted to any particular variable such as linguistic ability or reading strategies. Roles of each variable are interrelated and contribute to the failure in reading comprehension.

Thai EFL readers might not be able to comprehend what they read due to the absence of schemata: Content schemata and formal schemata. EFL readers might fail to apply their prior knowledge, even though they have it. It is also possible that they might not have prior knowledge relevant to what they read. Thus, either lacking appropriate prior knowledge or failing to apply it drives EFL readers to over-rely on the text processing or bottom-up processing only, which causes reading difficult for them.

Insufficient knowledge of the target language could be another

variable affecting reading success or failure. During the process of reading, if having inadequate knowledge of language structure and vocabulary, readers might have difficulty in making predictions; for instance, they might not be able to anticipate whether the next word will be a noun or a verb, or whether the letter following k is going to be n, a, i or e. Furthermore, when facing more complicated structures which significantly differ from the structure of their own language such as deletion, embedding, and negation, Thai readers are likely to fail to understand the meanings.

Self-perception and self-confidence also affect their success or failure in reading. If perceiving themselves as an effective reader, readers will form an outcome expectancy of success, and then the degree of their self-confidence in processing reading will increase. These make the readers able to monitor their reading effectively. In contrast, if self-perception is negative, readers will form an outcome expectancy for failure, and the degree of their confidence will decrease.

Reading in the content area requires techniques to facilitate reading. If EFL readers do not know sufficient reading techniques such as making uses of linguistic mechanics, graphic organizer, annotation, etc. to deal with content area reading, it could make their reading comprehension more difficult.

Some instructional implications are suggested to resolve the participant's reading problem.

1. The participant's misconceptions of reading should be primarily clarified. He should be informed that skilled readers would trade-off between knowledge-based processing and text-based processing; that is, activating their schemata to make predictions and to construct meanings from texts. To reduce the uncertainty of anticipating and meaning making, the readers should apply the graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues. Readers should be able to apply both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively.

2. To extend his prior knowledge, the participant should be encouraged to do the narrow reading (Carrell, 1983) which confines to a single topic or a single author. Doing the narrow reading not only expands his schemata in the field of study but makes him familiar with the specialized vocabulary, structure and the author's style.

3. The participant should be encouraged to have social interaction with native speakers. Social interaction could be an opportunity for the participant to use his English language and expand his repertoire of English language. It benefits not only to extend his linguistic ability but to clarify his unanswered questions from his readings.

4. Direct instruction of the organizational patterns in the expository text should be provided. According to studies (Meyer, 1979; Slater et al., 1985; Slater, 1985; Tixier et al., 1984), they display positive effects of the instruction of the organizational

pattern on recall and comprehension. If the instruction is provided, it may assist the participant to identify central ideas of what is being read and to identify the logical connections among ideas in the text.

5. The participant should be exposed to complex structures such as negation, embedding, passive voice, deletion and nominalization within context during reading (Nilagupta, 1977).

6. Direct instruction of reading strategies which are essential to reading textbooks should be provided in order to extend his repertoires of the strategies to facilitate his reading comprehension. Such reading strategies and techniques for reading textbooks that should be taught are: SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Review and Recite), SCROL (Survey the heading, Connect, Read the text, Outline, and Look back), LETME (Linking, Extracting, Transforming, Monitoring and Extending) and text marking (Annotation) (Grant, 1994). The participant should be informed how, where, and when to apply those reading strategies and be encouraged to try those strategies during the instruction. When those strategies facilitate the participant's reading effectively, it will lead to positive effects as well. That is, the participant may rebuild his self-perception as an effective reader in English and self-confidence. Hopefully, he can become strategic, independent reader.

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APPENDIX A: THE GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Age: _____ Sex: Male _____ Female _____

Birthplace (Country): _____ Country of citizenship: _____

1. How long have you been in the U. S.? _____
2. Is English the usual language spoken at home? _____
   Other language(s)? _____
3. List all colleges or universities attended beginning with the most recent or current (one line each)

Name	Location (state/country)	Dates attended mo/yr-mo/yr	Degree	Major

4. How do you assess your abilities in English?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Listening				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				

5. How do you assess your abilities in your native language?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Listening				
Speaking				
Reading				
Writing				

6. How long have you been learning English? _____
7. When did you start learning English (Grade level)? _____
8. Was English the language of instruction for the English class in your schools?

Schools	Yes	No
Elementary school		
Secondary school		
High school		
College		
Graduate school		

9. Recent Work Experience Date

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

10. How often did you use English for communication during working in your country? (Always, usually, often, rarely and never) _____

11. How often do you use English for communication during working in the U. S.? (If you do not work, skip to the next question.) (Always, usually, often, rarely and never) _____

12. How often do you read for fun at home? (Always, usually, often, rarely and never) _____

13. Assess your attitudes

	Happiest	Slightly happy	Mildly upset	Very upset
How do you feel about reading for fun at home?				
How do you feel about getting a book for a present?				
How do you feel about spending free time reading?				
How do you feel about going to a bookstore?				

	Happiest	Slightly happy	Mildly upset	Very upset
How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?				
How do you feel about reading your textbook?				
How do you feel about learning from a book?				
How do you feel about using a dictionary?				

For official use only

Possible score: _____ = _____%

Score obtained: _____ = _____%

14. How often do you do during reading?

	Always	Usually	Almost never	Never
Think about something else while you are reading				
Write down every single word in the text				
Say every word over and over				
Ask yourself questions about the ideas in the text				
Underline important parts of what you are reading				
Ask question about parts of the text that you don't understand				
Tie what you are reading to your prior experience and prior knowledge				
Imagine or have a picture of the story or of what you are reading in mind				

	Always	Usually	Almost never	Never
Change speed (read the story more slowly and carefully)				
Reread the text				
Predict outcomes				
Anticipate teacher's expectation				
Skip the parts you don't understand in the text				
Check through the text to see if you remember all of it				
Write it down on your own words				

15. When you read and come with something you don't know, what do you do?

_____

_____

_____

16. Had you ever been taught any reading strategies before attending the tutorial session? If so, what are those reading strategies?

_____

_____

_____

17. Is there anything else that we should know, any special concerns you have about your reading and writing?

_____

_____

_____

18. I give my permission for the researcher to use the information provided on the questionnaire for research purpose.

_____ _____

(Signature) (Date)

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR READING IN ENGLISH

Questionnaire: Reading in English

Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____

Can you read any language(s) other than English and Thai?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, which language(s)? _____

Do you regularly read English materials outside the classroom?

Circle: Yes No

If so, please check whichever apply: _____ newspapers

_____ popular magazines

_____ novels, literature

_____ other (specify)

_____

The following statements are about silent reading in English. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by marking (X) the appropriate number: 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. When reading silently in English, I am able to anticipate what will come next in the text...					
2. When reading silently in English, I am able to recognize the difference between main points and supporting details.....					
3. When reading silently in English, I am able to relate information which comes next in the text to previous information in the text.....					

4. When reading silently in English, I am able to question the significance or truthfulness of what the author says					
5. When reading silently in English, I am able to use my prior knowledge and experience to understand the content of the text I am reading					
6. When reading silently in English, I have a good sense of when I understand something and when I do not					

When reading silently in English, if I don't understand something,	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
7. I keep on reading and hope for clarification further on					
8. I reread the problematic part.....					
9. I go back to a point before the problematic part and reread from there					
10. I look up unknown words in a dictionary					
11. I give up and stop reading					

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When reading silently in English, the things I do to read effectively are to focus on	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
12. mentally sounding out parts of the words.....					
13. understanding the meaning of each word					
14. getting the overall meaning of the text....					
15. being able to pronounce each whole word.....					
16. the grammatical structures.....					
17. relating the text to what I already know about the topic.....					
18. looking up words in the dictionary.....					
19. the details of the content.....					
20. the organization of the text.....					

When reading silently in English, things that make the reading difficult are	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
21. the sounds of the individual words.....					
22. pronunciation of the words					
23. recognizing the words.....					

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

24. The grammatical structures.....					
25. the alphabet...					
26. relating the text to what I already know about the topic					
27. getting the overall meaning of the text....					
28. the organization of the text.....					

The best reader I know in English is a good reader because of his/her ability to	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly disagree 1
29. recognize words.....					
30. sound out words.....					
31. understand the overall meaning of a text.....					
32. use a dictionary					
33. guess at word meanings.....					
34. integrate the information in the text with what he/she already knows					
35. focus on the details of the content.....					
36. grasp the organization of the text.....					

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APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR READING IN THAI

Questionnaire: Reading in Thai

Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____

Can you read any language(s) other than English and Thai?

Circle: Yes No

If yes, which language(s)? _____

Do you regularly read English materials outside the classroom?

Circle: Yes No

If so, please check whichever apply: _____ newspapers

_____ popular magazines

_____ novels, literature

_____ other (specify)

_____

The following statements are about silent reading in English. Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by marking (X) the appropriate number: 5 indicates strong agreement, 1 indicates strong disagreement.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. When reading silently in English, I am able to anticipate what will come next in the text...					
2. When reading silently in English, I am able to recognize the difference between main points and supporting details.....					
3. When reading silently in English, I am able to relate information which comes next in the text to previous information in the text.....					

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4. When reading silently in English, I am able to question the significance or truthfulness of what the author says					
5. When reading silently in English, I am able to use my prior knowledge and experience to understand the content of the text I am reading					
6. When reading silently in English, I have a good sense of when I understand something and when I do not					

When reading silently in English, if I don't understand something,	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
7. I keep on reading and hope for clarification further on					
8. I reread the problematic part.....					
9. I go back to a point before the problematic part and reread from there					
10. I look up unknown words in a dictionary					
11. I give up and stop reading					

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When reading silently in English, the things I do to read effectively are to focus on	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
12. mentally sounding out parts of the words.....					
13. understanding the meaning of each word					
14. getting the overall meaning of the text....					
15. being able to pronounce each whole word.....					
16. the grammatical structures.....					
17. relating the text to what I already know about the topic.....					
18. looking up words in the dictionary.....					
19. the details of the content.....					
20. the organization of the text.....					

When reading silently in English, things that make the reading difficult are	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
21. the sounds of the individual words.....					
22. pronunciation of the words					
23. recognizing the words.....					

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

24. The grammatical structures.....					
25. the alphabet...					
26. relating the text to what I already know about the topic					
27. getting the overall meaning of the text....					
28. the organization of the text.....					

The best reader I know in English is a good reader because of his/her ability to	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Dis-agree 2	Strongly disagree 1
29. recognize words.....					
30. sound out words.....					
31. understand the overall meaning of a text.....					
32. use a dictionary					
33. guess at word meanings.....					
34. integrate the information in the text with what he/she already knows					
35. focus on the details of the content.....					
36. grasp the organization of the text.....					

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